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Rural Health

February 2014

A Special Section of the:

Colby Free Press
Oberlin Herald
Goodland Star-News
Bird City Times
Saint Francis Herald
Norton Telegram

Welcome

We at Nor'West Newspapers feel health care is one of the top two components to a healthy, vital economy in any town, along with our schools.

We found health care available and mostly affordable in our region. Our hospitals and clinics sometimes struggle, but they are surviving and growing and serving their counties. Their staffs are committed to providing top-notch service and excellent patient care.

Access to good health care can mean the difference between a rural town living or dying.

The subject interests older people, who see their health declining and are looking for someplace nearby to get the care they need. It interests young families who are beginning to raise families and want someone nearby to handle those little emergencies.

Specialists, once found only in the cities, are coming to their patients, and smaller hospitals are willing to send those with acute needs on to larger, more specialized facilities.

Our hospitals continue wrestling with the problem of recruiting doctors, nurses and staff. Many are investing in the future, trying to grow hometown doctors and specialists.

Alternative sources for helping people live healthy lives provide many services and these can be found all over our area.

No one – families, young people or the elderly – wants to settle in a town without good hospitals, clinics and emergency medical treatment. Technology continues to expand the ability of the small hospitals stay up with the latest in medicine and bring the doctor closer to the patient.

The government is trying to compensate rural hospitals more fairly, but the courts will have a major impact on the effects the national health reforms will have on the entire nation.

Cases are slowly moving toward the Supreme Court. The Affordable Care Act passed in March 2010 and more and more provisions are going into effect each year.

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Cover Photo

Jason Johnson, a registered respiratory therapist and registered nurse from St. Francis, demonstrated the body plethysmograph, or “body box,” at the Decatur County Hospital as Deb Klima monitored the read out of his breathing. – Photo by Ladd Wendelin/The Oberlin Herald

Index of advertisers

ADAC	25
Andbe Home	15
Barnes Family Chiropractic	4
Belmar Women's Clinic	28
Burlington Family Dentistry	6
Canterbury Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery	25
Cheyenne County Health Department	14
Cheyenne County Hospital	8
Citizens Medical Center	32
Cole Family Eyecare	5
Dr. James Reeves	31
Dr. Jeffrey Waterhouse	4
DSNWK	3
DSNWK/Frontier Developmental Center	24
Fairview Estates	29
Fredrickson Insurance	17
Fry Eye Associates	19
Ft. Hays State University	36
Gambinos Pizza	15
Goodland Home Health	24
Goodland Medical Arts Pharmacy	27
Goodland Regional Medical Center	18
Good Samaritan Hospital	11
Good Samaritan Society.....	30

Great Plains Family Dentistry	26
Haas Dentistry	31
Heartland Rural Counseling	35
Heart to Heart Christian Counseling	16
High Plains Mental Health	14
Inlow Interiors	5
Insurance Central	10
Blue Cross Blue Shield	26
Kelley's Home Medical	7
KFNF Radio	10
KXXX Radio	13
Lamont Shirk	31
LA Projects-Health Cabin	7
L+C Home Health Agency.....	19
Logan County Hospital	22
Logan Manor	35
McCook Clinic	16
McCook Community Hospital	21
Mortensen Computer Services.....	28
Movement Connection	15
Northwest Kansas Chiropractic	34
Northwest Kansas Hearing	25
Norton Chiropractic Center	16
Norton County Health Department	13

Norton County Hospital	12
Norton Recreation Commission	6
NW Kansas Tech College	19
Oakley Pharmacy	17
Office Works	29
Options	6
Palace Drug Store	31
Precision Hearing Aid Centers.....	27
Quality Urgent Care	28
Rawlins County Dental	20
Rawlins County Health Center	25
Renovo Medical	27
Ron Clark Insurance	4
Sheridan County Health Complex	16
Sondra Krayca	34
St. Catherine's	9
Thomas County Health Department	28
Tina Harris Physical Therapy	31
Unger Chiropractic Clinic	14
Vision Source	29
Walmart Pharmacy	22
Ward Drug Store	25
Wheat Ridge Acres	27
Whispering Pines	20

Health care law has year-by-year changes

By Kevin Bottrell

*The Goodland Star-News
kbottrell@nwkansas.com*

The slow rollout of new regulations, taxes and features included in the 2010 Affordable Care Act has continued, with new items going into effect in 2013 and at the beginning of this year, and still more planned for 2015.

2013

The most high-profile part of the Affordable Care Act began last year: the insurance exchange programs.

The Health Insurance Marketplaces launched in October amid a flurry of controversy. These were designed to help people search for and enroll in private insurance plans, as well as find information on costs and options.

The federal website for these marketplaces, HealthCare.gov, was unable to withstand the number of people attempting to log on in the first days and suffered outages. It has suffered other glitches since, all of which have cost the federal government about \$47 million to fix.

However, about 2.1 million people were able to enroll in the first three months.

Some states have set up their own version of the marketplace websites. Colorado's is available at prd.connectforhealthco.com. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – a federal agency – runs the marketplaces for Kansas and Nebraska. These can be accessed at HealthCare.gov.

Four insurers – two Blue Cross Blue Shield companies and two Coventry companies – have entered into agreements to offer 72 plans in Kansas.

The deadline to enroll in plans beginning Jan. 1 passed in December, but the open enrollment period extends through March 31.

In addition to the websites, there is a 24-hour phone line – (800) 318-2596 – with “navigators” to help people enroll. Insurance agents may be able to help people get insurance through the marketplace as well.

Other changes last year included:

- Going into effect Jan. 1, 2013, was the beginning of a \$15 billion investment over 10 years in preventative services for chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer or diabetes. The money goes to pay state Medicaid programs that offer free or cheap preventative services.
- A pilot program for bundling services was implemented, which encourages coordination between hospitals, doctors and other providers. Instead of billing items separately, providers could put everything together in one package.
- An additional .9 of 1 percent income tax for Medicare hospital bills was imposed for those making more than \$200,000 a year or \$250,000 for couples filing jointly. Additionally, a 3.8 percent investment tax will imposed for those income lev-



els. All told, this should generate \$210 billion over 10 years.

- A 2.3 percent tax will be imposed on the price of medical devices, excluding hearing aids and corrective lenses. It includes defibrillators, pacemakers and artificial joints.
- Taxpayers can now get a deduction if total medical expenses add up to 10 percent of earned income. Used to be 7.5 percent.
- Flexible Spending Accounts are now capped at \$2,500. Employers used to set the limit of what could be set aside from paychecks tax free to pay for non-covered medical expenses.
- W-2 forms now have a line showing employer health care benefits.

2014

As of Jan. 1, several parts of the health care law came into effect.

- The individual mandate, the requirement that everyone purchase health insurance, began this year. Most types of coverage satisfy the requirements, including Medicaid, Medicare, employer-based insurance and private insurance.

Those who do not have health insurance will pay a penalty tax of \$95 per individual, \$285 per family or 1 percent of income, whichever is greater. That will increase to \$695 per individual, \$2,085 per family, or 2.5 percent of income. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2013 that the federal government was allowed to impose such a requirement because the penalty is called a tax and not a fine.

However, people who earn too little to file a federal income tax return or who spend more than 8 percent of household income on health care will be exempt.

Subsidies will be available in the form of tax credits for households between 100 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level if they buy through the insurance marketplaces.

- Another big change is that health insurance plans will now have to be offered to everyone. Companies cannot charge more or less based on health and gender, and people cannot be excluded due to pre-existing conditions.

Among other changes in 2014 are:

- Those over age 65 who earn less than \$14,500 a year for individuals and \$29,700 for families (133 percent of the federal poverty level) who are not otherwise eligible for Medicaid became eligible for Medicaid. This is estimated to cover between 7 million and 16 million more people.

States will get 100 percent of the money to cover this from the federal government for three years, and 90 percent after that.

Along with this is a provision that increase primary care reimbursements in Medicaid about 73 percent to match Medicare. This will vary by state. Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado are among 20 states that are expected to see between 25 to 49 percent more in reimbursements. This began in 2013.

- A new system for eligibility and enrollment in Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Programs and exchanges.

- Hospitals and clinics that are Medicaid providers will be able to make a presumptive determination whether a person is eligible.

2015

- Effective Jan. 1 will be a new provision that bases physician payments on how good the care they provide is. Payments will be higher for better quality care and lower for lower quality care.

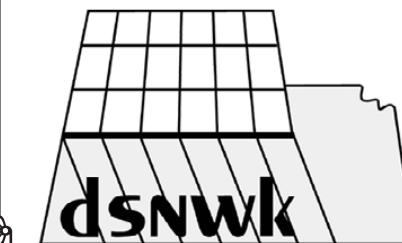
- There will be an increase in the federal match rate for Children's Health Insurance Programs by 23 percent as of Oct. 1, 2015.

Index of stories

Affordable Care Act	3
Cheyenne County Hospital	8
Cheyenne County Services	8
Colby Hospital	33
Colby Services	33
Decatur County Hospital	28
Decatur County Other Services	28
Goodland Hospital	18
Goodland Services	20
Healthy Recipes	34

Kit Carson County Hospital	6
Kit Carson Service District	7
Logan County Hospital, Clinics	22
Movement Therapy	15
Norton County Hospital	12
Norton Eye Doctor	4
Norton Other Services	13
Rawlins County Health Center	24
Sheridan County Complex	16
Welcome	2

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Norton eye doctor recommends yearly

By Dana Paxton

The Norton Telegram
dpaxton@nwkanssas.com

Health care doesn't end with a visit to a medical doctor. People also need to keep on top of their eye health, and nearly every area county has an optometrist to help people with that.

Dr. Benjamin Cole, originally from Russell, started his practice in Norton in January 2012. Wanting to start his own practice in a smaller town and to return to a familiar area brought him to Norton, he said. The staff at Cole Family Eyecare includes Dr. Cole, office manager Megan Walter and Kari Husted, a board certified optician.

Dr. Cole said that the youngest patient he has ever seen was 2 weeks old, but on average, kids should be seen by the age of 3, and for sure before starting kindergarten. The state has a program called See to Learn which encourages parents to have their children seen by age 3. This is to catch and correct any problems children have at a young age. If there seems to be an issue, Dr. Cole said, the child should be seen yearly to watch their progress.

He recommends for people around the age of 30 to "See Yearly to See Clearly" if they

suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes or high cholesterol. Most people by the age of 40 start to experience some problems, he said. By 50, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataracts can start. These things all affect the eyes, general health and quality of life.

Glaucoma occurs when eye conditions lead to damage to the optic nerve that carries images from the eye to the brain. This is caused when fluid stops circulating around the front part of the eye like it should, he said, and it gets worse over time. If the pressure continues, it could lead to permanent loss of vision, and without treatment can cause permanent blindness within a few years.

The exact cause is unknown, but the condition tends to be inherited. There really are no early symptoms such as pain or feeling of pressure; having a yearly check with an optometrist is the best and fastest way to catch glaucoma so it can be treated with medication.

Macular degeneration affects older adults and results in loss of vision in the center of the visual field because of damage to the retina. It is the major cause of blindness and visual impairment in adults 50 and older.

This eye disease makes it difficult or impossible to read or recognize faces. The peripheral vision remains the same, but the center

of what is seen is blurry, and this may lead to blindness. It is caused by a thinning of the tissue in the eye. Age, history, diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol, hypertension, race, exposure to light, vitamin D deficiency and smoking are just some of the factors of getting macular degeneration. Some of these causes can be controlled with use of supplements if caught early enough by your eye doctor.

Cataracts produce cloudy areas in the lens of the eye. Vision is blurry or fuzzy and eyes are sensitive to glare, sometimes causing double vision. Some of the causes are aging, overexposure to ultraviolet radiation, diabetes, glaucoma, retinal detachment, long-term steroid medication use, frequent x-rays or radiation to the head, family history, eye injury or being born with the condition. Surgery is the only treatment. The cloudy lens is removed and replaced with a man-made lens.

A regular eye exam starts with a pre-test to check vision, color, depth perception and blood pressure in the eye. Focusing and the curvature of the front of the eye are also looked at. After this, a history is done, since high blood pressure or diabetes in the family makes people more apt to have issues with their own eyes.

The exam is next: covering ocular health, eye pressure, the retina, the lenses and wheth-

er the person has dry eyes or allergies.

Dr. Cole says he recommends preventative care.

"The quicker we catch a problem," he said, "the quicker we can prevent vision loss. If a person waits too long, and vision is lost there is no way to get it back."

The most common cases he has seen, he said, involve macular degeneration and diabetes.

"They are the biggest problem for lost vision around here," Cole said.

Being part of the See to Learn program, he added, he has already caught over a dozen cases of younger children needing help. A common childhood eye problem is called amblyopia, where one eye works fine and has good vision but the other eye does not, so the brain shuts the weaker eye off.

An eye patch and corrective glasses can usually get the brain to turn that eye back on, he said. Too often, however, this problem is not caught and the child goes through life with one good eye. See to Learn helps catch problems like this early on so they can be prevented.

He said people should not be fearful about going to the eye doctor. It could be the best thing you ever did in terms of quality of life in the long run.

checkups

Dr. Cole on average sees eight to 10 patients a day and his office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The office at 114 N Kansas Ave. is closed over the lunch hour but open from 8 a.m. to noon on Fridays. The phone is (785) 877-5115.


He went to Kansas State University, where he received a bachelor's degree in 2006, and then to Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tenn., graduating in 2010. He did a residency at the Memphis Veterans Affairs Hospital with an emphasis in ocular disease.

His office accepts vision insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Superior. Glasses and contacts are not made at the office but can be ordered and back to his office within a week.

Dr. Benjamin Cole of Cole Family Eyecare in Norton performed an eye examination for Megan Walter. Modern technology makes examinations more efficient and faster, he says.

— Photo by Dana Paxton
The Norton Telegram





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New addition, equipment at Kit Carson

By Kevin Bottrell

The Goodland Star-News
kbottrell@nwkans.com

Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital has undergone a major renovation in the past several years and has updated its radiology department to feature some of the latest technology.

The 19-bed Critical Access facility includes three two-bed rooms, plus two labor and delivery rooms, along with a surgical room for cesarean-sections if needed. The hospital sees about 60 births a year, officials say. Two nurses are on duty in the day and at night, with one evening and emergency-room nurse.

Savannah Hornung, public relations manager for the Kit Carson County Health Service District, which manages the hospital and other health-care agencies in the county, said the hospital recently started using a certified registered nurse anesthetist in partnership with a medical group out of Denver, so is able to offer epidurals for obstetrics patients.

The hospital underwent a major renovation six years ago, adding a new section in front. Next to the parking lot is a new admissions and administration section. All patient rooms are in the new section. In the old section, former patient rooms have been converted to



The Burlington ambulance service, run by the Kit Carson County government, will be housed in this new building, which is under construction just north of the hospital. – Photo by Kevin Bottrell/The Goodland Star-News

serve the specialty clinic.

Also housed in the spacious addition is the radiology center. A new magnetic resonance imaging machine, or MRI, was installed in November. Stephanie Campbell, a registered radiology technician, said the machine provides a faster and clearer picture than what was previously available. The higher-definition pictures allow doctors to make more effective diagnosis.

Another new piece of equipment is the

digital mammography machine, installed in December 2012. Campbell said the hospital has seen an increase in the number of people coming in to get mammograms since the new machine was installed. The patients had been going to Denver before, she added.

The machine was paid for with grants and donations from the community.

“We have an annual Breast Cancer Walk that raised \$30,000 over two years to help pay for the machine,” Hornung said.



Kit Carson County Health Service District

- Beds – 19 as a critical access hospital.
- Administrator – Donald Wade, C.E.O.
- Providers – Three primary care physicians, one independent provider, three physician assistants and 25 specialty clinic physicians.
- Phone – (719) 346-5311

The district is big on community outreach, she said. It holds a “Teddy Bear Clinic” where pre-schoolers and kindergartners can come in and see what it is like to visit the hospital and doctors’ offices. The district provides bike helmets for kids during the annual bike rodeo.

Also installed in 2012 was a new ultrasound machine. Campbell said the machine has different types of probes to provide different visuals. A new table goes closer to the

facilities

floor to improve patient comfort.

The department’s 64-slice computer tomography scanner provides 64 cross-section images, where many machines offer far fewer. Campbell said it is fast, which means patients are on the table for less time. The machine can scan any part of the body and look for kidney stones, pneumonia in the lungs, an infected appendix and more.

Also in the department is a Dual X-ray Absorptiometry scanner, which looks at bone density. The radiology center is attached to the hospital’s emergency room, on the west side of the building.

Located in the old section of the building are the lab and administration sections, as well as the specialty clinic and surgery suite.

The hospital is planning to update its surgery suite this year. Hornung said the idea is to provide the same procedures the hospital has now, with an eye toward expanding later. The district is looking for a contractor, she said, and hopes to have the remodel complete later this year.

Kit Carson County, which runs the ambulance service, is building a new ambulance barn on the block north of the hospital.



This bone density scanner is just one of several new pieces of equipment that the Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital has obtained for its radiology section. The scanner can, among other things, look for signs of osteoporosis in patients. – Photo by Kevin Bottrell/The Goodland Star-News

Service district offers health care options in Colorado

In 1996, a new parent organization was formed to oversee six health-care agencies in Burlington, Colo., and Kit Carson County, incorporating medical clinics and home-health services with the county hospital.

The Kit Carson County Health Service District is governed by a seven-member board of Kit Carson County residents. The agencies it governs are:

• **Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital**

The 19-bed Critical Access facility at 286 16th St. serves a county of 8,000 people.

Construction on the current building was started in 1946 and completed in 1947. Savannah Hornung, district public relations manager, said people wanted the hospital to be dedicated to the veterans of World War II, thus the name.

The hospital has built three additions, 1968,

1978 and 2008, increasing the number of beds and most recently, redoing the front area – which includes the radiology department and admissions.

• **Home Health and Caring Hands Hospice**

Housed in the older section of the hospital, this section covers several services.

Home Health has nurses and physical therapists making home visits to people within a 60-mile radius, in Colorado only, to provide everything from wound care to injections and catheter care, to tube-feeding management and more.

The hospice, which provides end-of-life services such as 24-hour nursing care and pain management, is run out of the same office with the same staff of eight employees. Hornung said that helps patients who need to

transition from one to the other.

• **Specialty Clinic**

The hospital brings in 23 specialists out of Denver, nearly every working day. Specialties include dermatology (skin), pulmonology (lung), orthopedics (bone), audiology (hearing) and more.

The clinic also is housed in the older section of the hospital, in former patient rooms.

• **Parke Health Center**

The district’s family practice clinic – opened in 2000 – is across the street from the main hospital. It was named after the woman who donated the land, Mabel Parke. It was remodeled in 2011.

The center has 12 exam rooms and now uses a full electronic medical record system implemented in November 2012. Manager Brenda Briegel said records can be accessed

at any of the district’s facilities.

• **Parke Wellness Center**

In the clinic basement is the district’s physical therapy department, known as Parke Wellness Center. The center has two physical therapists, two physical therapist assistants and a cardiac rehabilitation nurse. The therapists can help with arthritis, back or joint pain, stroke recovery and more.

A traveling service provides cardio stress tests twice a month by appointment.

• **Stratton Medical Clinic**

A family practice clinic in Stratton, about 18 miles west of Burlington on Interstate 70. Dr. Bong Pham and physician assistant Candy Campbell serve the surrounding area under the district’s umbrella.



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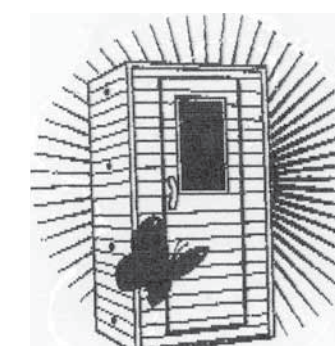
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Cheyenne County Hospital, Clinics & County Health Department “To Promote a Healthy Community through our Commitment to Quality Patient Care”



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Cheyenne County care available even

By Amanda Miller

*The Saint Francis Herald
amiller@nwkansas.com*

The Cheyenne County medical community has had a busy year. Along with staffing changes and additions to the specialty doctors available, the hospital has a new respiratory therapy department and a “4D” ultrasound machine in the radiology department.

In March, Dr. Rebecca Allard announced her resignation effective July 1. Dr. Allard had been the physician delivering babies for Cheyenne County Hospital for the past seven years. During the break in obstetric care that followed, doctors from around the area offered to assist with prenatal visits, on-call coverage and cesarean section backup. Pre- and post-natal appointments for obstetric patients were available, easing the necessity of travel. The collaboration allowed hospital staff to maintain obstetric skills.

The clinic, hospital and nursing staff are starting to gear up a resumption of obstetric services this year. Beginning this March, Dr. Megan Brown will begin seeing the obstetrics patients. She will become full time in August and start delivering babies.



- Beds – 16 beds as a critical access hospital.
- Revenue 2013 – \$7,315,791.
- Loss 2013 – \$1,328,904, including charity care and bad debt
- County Money 2013 – \$740,357.
- Doctors – one medical doctor, three physician assistants, one resident nurse anesthetist and visiting specialists.
- Administrator – Judy Rockwood.
- Phone – (785) 332-2104.

She will have Drs. Travis Daise and Darren Matchell of Goodland and Colby, respectively, to call on with questions and call coverage, as well as Dr. David Forschner, a Denver specialist in obstetrics and gynecology for more complex cases.

Dr. Brown will be able to lean on these physician's 30-plus years of experience. Ar-

Variety of care to be had

By Amanda Miller

*The Saint Francis Herald
amiller@nwkansas.com*

Health care is easy to find and conveniently located in Cheyenne County.

The Cheyenne County Clinic at 221 W. First St. in St. Francis is open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, and for walk-ins only from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday.

The Cheyenne County Hospital at 210 W. First St. is across the street from the clinic. The hospital has a federal designation as a critical access hospital, meeting the primary hospital needs of a rural community. The hospital is working on obtaining a Level IV Trauma Center designation. It is prepared to handle emergencies, accidental injuries or delivering a baby.

The Cheyenne County Health Department is in the basement of the clinic. Mila Bandel, county health nurse, is available 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Mrs. Bandel does all the immunizations for the county and promotes health education.

The county also has a clinic in Bird City at 221 W. Bressler. Doctors, a physical therapist and the county health nurse all rotate to staff the clinic 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday.

Medical Staff

Right now, the Cheyenne County medical

community has one physician, three physician assistants and one resident certified registered nurse anesthetist.

Dr. Mary Beth Miller has been on the staff since 1999, with Dr. Megan Brown starting to see patients in March.

The medical staff also includes physician assistants Kristle Raile and Tyler Raile, who joined the staff in 2007. Dana Jewell-Broughman began in November as the newest physicians assistant. She brought with her 32 years of experience.

Kim Zwegygart, who lives in St. Francis, is the resident certified registered nurse anesthetist.

Surgeons and specialists

Dr. Charles Frankum comes to the hospital and does surgery and surgical consultation every other week. He specializes in colon and rectal surgery, advanced laparoscopic and general surgery. He is from Denver, and works at other area hospitals as well.

Other specialists who come to the hospital include:

Dr. James Swinehart, dermatologist (skin diseases).

Dr. Kenneth Weisiger, pulmonologist (lung and respiratory).

Dr. Sean Denney, cardiology (heart) treatment.

Dr. Mathew Uyemera, ophthalmology (eye) issues.

keeps obstetrics after losing doctor

rangements are also in place for her to work with Dr. Barbara Quissell, a neonatologist at Presbyterian St. Luke's Hospital in Denver.

The hospital also brought in a new physician assistant, Dana Jewell-Broughman, in November.

“She brings 32 years of experience and will be a wonderful complement to the provider team,” said Judy Rockwood, hospital chief executive officer.

Dr. Dallas Walz is set to begin full time in August 2015 at the Cheyenne County clinic and hospital.

Along with seeing patients, the physicians also travel to Bird City, where the clinic is open from 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. Bird City residents can be seen without having to travel.

Specialty doctors available

Cheyenne County Hospital is always looking for specialty doctors to come to the facility so that patients do not have to drive to the city.

In December, the hospital added Dr. James Swinehart, a dermatologist, or skin specialist, to its list of outpatient specialists. He comes from Denver and does chemosurgery for skin cancer, and treatments for acne scars, skin

disease and moles, and psoriasis, to name a few.

New this year will be the addition of Dr. Weisiger, a pulmonologist, or lung and respiratory specialist. He is an internal medicine specialist with critical care training and board certification in sleep medicine. He will see patients with any lung problems, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and obstructive sleep apnea.

Other services offered include cardiology, or heart care. Dr. Sean Denney comes from Kearney, Neb., twice a month and does nuclear stress testing, echoes, carotid-artery checks and pacemaker checks.

Dr. Matthew Uyemera comes once a month for patients in need of ophthalmology, or eye care. He manages the health of patients' eyes and performs surgical procedures including cataract and blepharoplasty, or eyelid surgery.

Dr. James Reeves, podiatrist, or foot specialist, comes once a month to check feet for diabetic patients. He also performs surgeries, including hammer toes and bunions.

Dr. Charles Frankum of Denver does outpatient surgeries for patients with gastrointes-

See OBSTETRICS, Page 10

in and around St. Francis

Dr. James Reeves, podiatrist (foot specialist).

Dentists

Cheyenne County has two dentists, both in St. Francis.

Dr. Tim Poling works at 200 W. Washington in downtown St. Francis.

Dr. Melvin Dunn's office is at 300 N. College St., just north of the high school.

Chiropractors

There are three chiropractors in St. Francis, and one who is available in Bird City.

Dr. Brett Poling has an office located at 709 S. Benton, right off of U.S. 36 in St. Francis.

Dr. Patrick Stuart has had an office for many years at 115 S. Quincy in St. Francis.

Dr. Ryan Unger took over Fair Chiropractic. His office is at 120 N. Scott in St. Francis.

In Bird City, Dr. April Green goes once a week to see patients at 315 Bird Ave. She also offers acupuncture services.

Pharmacy

Krien Pharmacy, owned by Kody and Penny Krien, is at 105 W. Washington in downtown St. Francis.

Clinical therapist

Kris Rice, in the office building at 709 S. Benton, is a clinical therapist. Mrs. Rice is willing to work with patients who are dealing with depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, root causes of substance abuse and parenting issues. She can monitor

court-ordered supervised visits and do court-ordered parenting classes.

Nursing home

The Good Samaritan Village on U.S. 36 offers skilled nursing care and apartments for independent living.

The home has 35 beds. The Good Samaritan Society works alongside the Cheyenne County commissioners, as the facility now is owned by the county.

The Village has 14 independent living apartments.

Home health care

The Good Samaritan Home Health Care unit serves clients in Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Thomas and Rawlins counties. The agency offers physical and speech therapy along with skilled nursing, certified nurse aides and homemaker services.

Melissa Amster is the interim director.

Senior Center

The St. Francis Senior Center delivers meals on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. These are also the days that the center serves meals to seniors for a minimal price. Others can eat there for the cost of the meal.

The center not only offers food, but gives the older population a place to come for visiting, playing cards and games.

The Bird City Senior Center does not offer food, but is a place where seniors gather.

Audiology

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (620)271-3139
Kim Hendricks, Au.D.

Cardiology Services.....P: (620)272-2431

John T. Ferrell, M.D.

William Freund, M.D.

Arif Rohilla, M.D.

Critical Care-Medical.....P: (620)272-2265

Girish Mour, M.D.

Emergency Department.....P: (620)272-2290

Harold L. Perkins, M.D.

Stephen Grillot, D.O.

David Hellman, M.D.

Tanya J. Pittman, M.D.

Thomas Faulhaber, M.D.

Family Medicine

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (620)275-3780

Michael D. Jackson, M.D.

Mary White, APRN

Terry Hunsberger, D.O.....P: (620)275-3777

Plaza Medical Center.....P: (620)276-8201

Thomas L. Koksall, M.D.

Scott D. Booker, D.O.

Nathan Strandmark, D.O.

Jeremy Roderick, D.O.

Bryan Sticky, M.D.

Chuong D. Le, M.D......P: (620)275-4486

General Surgery

Zeferino J. Arroyo, M.D.....P: (620)275-3740

Joanne Rink, M.D.

Matthew Byrnes, M.D.

Kurt Kessler, M.D.....P: (620)271-3100

Hospice.....P: (620)272-2519

Hospitalist

Rishi Sharma, M.D.....P: (620)272-2265

Ajay Thakur, M.D.

Julie King, D.O.

Leo Altamirano, M.D.

Internal Medicine

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (620)275-3710

Edward L. Mangosing, M.D.

Rashi Agarwal, M.D.

Jack Jaeger, M.D.

Internal Medicine/Pediatrics

Siena Medical.....P: (620)275-3705

Lindsay Byrnes, M.D.

Nephrology

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (620)271-3139

Girish Mour, M.D.

Colleen Finegan, PA-C

Obstetrics & Gynecology

Women's Clinic of St. Catherine

Richard R. Hall, M.D.....P: (620)275-9752

Kimberly D. West, M.D.

Bret E. Heskett, M.D.

Mary Anne Cook, APRN

Occupational Medicine

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (620)275-3777

Terry R. Hunsberger, D.O.

Oncology-Medical

Central Care Cancer Center, P.A.

Resituto Tibayan, M.D.....P: (620)272-2579

Mark Fesen, M.D.

Merilyn Douglas, APRN

Oncology-Radiation

Central Care Cancer Center, P.A.

Claudia Perez-Tamayo, M.D.....P: (620)272-2102

Ophthalmology

Fry Eye Associates, P.A. ..P: (620)275-7248

Luther L. Fry, M.D.

William S. Clifford, M.D.

Gloria Hopkins, O.D.

Eric Fry, M.D.

Orthopaedic Surgery

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (620)275-3030

Guillermo Garcia, M.D.

James Britton, M.D.

Titus Plomaritis, M.D.

Kent Wagner, PA-C

Sandhill Orthopaedic.....P: (620)275-8400

Otolaryngology/ENT

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (620)275-3070

Jorge de Cardenas, M.D.

Pathology

Western Pathology Services, PA

Bruce D. Melin, M.D.....P: (620)272-2258

Eva J. Vachal, M.D.

Pediatrics

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (620)275-3730

James T. Zauche, M.D.

Michael W. Shull, D.O.

Elizabeth Doyle, M.D.

Leo Altamirano, M.D.

Podiatry

Siena Medical Clinic.....P: (800) 348-3998

Layne Dameron, D.P.M.

Psychiatry

Behavioral Health Dept......P: (620)272-2500

Radiology

Campus Garden Imaging.....P: (620)272-2276

Soen B. Liong, M.D.

Agustinus Suhardja, M.D.

Rehabilitation Department.....P: (620)272-2106

Siena Walk In Clinic.....P: (620)271-3170

Sleep Disorder Center.....P: (620)272-2420

William Leeds, M.D.

Urology

High Plains Urology

Ronald P. Catanese, M.D. F

Wound Care Center.....P: (620)272-2700

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Obstetrics care still available in St. Francis after losing doctor

OBSTETRICS, from Page 9

tinal needs. He has been coming to the clinic since 2004. He provides surgical consultation and if needed surgery including hernia, gall bladder, appendectomy, colonoscopies and other outpatient procedures.

Respiratory Therapy department

Jason Johnson, a respiratory therapist, was hired as the director of the new cardiopulmonary department for both inpatient and outpatient services. Mr. Johnson has worked at the hospital for the past seven years as needed. He is working full time as of August and running the department.

He can provide all respiratory care, full pulmonary function testing and cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation. He works with patients from every age range, including infants.

Some patients who may need to see a respiratory therapist are those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and emphysema, he said. Patients who have heart procedures such as a stent or bypass surgery will also be seen.

"We are still developing different programs," said Mr. Johnson, "but it is going really good and I am really excited."

Health information

The hospital transitioned to electronic medical records in the last year. This has been a big change, said Jackie Ritchey, health information management director. It gives the hospital many capabilities that paper charting did not. There is now less paperwork to sort through, more clarity of documentation, and the dates, times and details are all on a computer screen. All of a patient's records are available in the computer, rather than having to obtain paper records.

The clinic began using electronic health records two years ago. Having the hospital use the electronic records as well will benefit doctors and patients, Ms. Ritchey said.

With records moved to electronic form, the hospital and clinic joined the Kansas Health Information Exchange. Having electronic records available to medical providers across

the state makes information on a patient available anywhere it's needed, and the records are available in an emergency.

The hospital is also preparing for a change in coding systems used to report diagnoses and inpatient procedures. The World Health Organization creates the coding. Currently in the United States, ICD-9-CM is the system in use. On Oct. 1, ICD-10-CM will replace the older system.

ICD-10-CM will provide greater coding accuracy and more specific diagnosis, and will reflect the knowledge of current disease processes and medical technology. With the adoption of the new coding system, the number of diagnosis and procedure codes will vastly increase from 14,000 to 68,000. Physicians and coders will both require training on ICD-10-CM. At Cheyenne County Hospital, the software has been purchased and the health information staff have been attending training in preparation for the change.

Radiology department

The Diagnostic Imaging Department now has a registered radiologic technologist. Mary Ruth Burkett has finished school. She had been a licensed radiologic technologist, working at Cheyenne County Hospital for the past 14 years.

The ultrasound department also has a full-time certified sonographer available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays. Darrell Reed has completed his training and certification in abdominal, obstetrics/gynecologic and vascular areas of sonography.

Procedures offered include evaluating abdominal pain for gallstones, liver, pancreas, spleen, kidney problems and aneurysm screening. He can also screen for blood clots, and deep vein thrombosis screenings for a condition that could lead to strokes and poor circulation. Complete echocardiographs, or heart scans, are also available.

The department can also now do 4D ultrasounds. 4D is the newest technology for parents to see their babies while still in the womb.



Twin girls Miley (left) and Maizey Thadani, children of Karan and Joni Thadani of St. Francis, played quietly before their turn to get their shots at the Cheyenne County Health Department. Later, mom held Miley as nurse Julie Brunk gave her a shot. County Health Nurse Mila Bandel (right) is in charge of the vaccination program in Cheyenne County.

— Photo by Karen Krien/The St. Francis Herald



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LEN COADY
— LICENSED AGENT —



Electronic health records are a digital or computer version of patients' paper charts. Registered nurse Haley Jones will be able to access patients' records in real time, making the information available whenever and wherever it is needed.
— Photo by Mike Stephens/The Norton Telegram

Norton shifts to

By Mike Stephens

The Norton Telegram
mstephens@nwksradio.com

The Norton County Hospital is converting all of its patient information from paper documents to a digital format called electronic health records, or EHR.

The federal government is requiring these changes of all hospitals in the U.S., according to information provided by Network Administrator Jeff Nuhfer. Norton County Hospital has just completed Stage 1 of the "meaningful use" implementation and has begun working on Stage 2. Three stages are required by the government.

The term meaningful use comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which authorized the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – the federal agency which oversees the two big government medical programs – to provide incentive payments to eligible professionals and hospitals who adopt, implement, upgrade or demonstrate meaningful use of a certified electronic health record technology. Because the system is expensive to implement, the government has incentives for hospitals that demonstrate meaningful use. There are penalties as well for hospitals that do not comply.

"The Recovery and Reinvestment Act pro-



Norton County Hospital

- Beds – 25 as critical access hospital.
- Revenue 2013 – \$15,101,560 (patient revenue).
- Profit 2013 – \$203,858.
- County Money – \$120,000 (2.5 mills on property tax).
- Providers – Three physicians, two physician assistants, one nurse practitioner.
- Administrator – Richard Miller.
- Phone – (785) 877-3351.

vides incentives because it is very expensive," said Hospital Administrator Richard Miller. "If we don't progress, there will be penalties as early as 2015."

The main purpose of electronic health records is to make patients' records easily transferable to other hospitals and providers. An electronic health record is an electronic documentation of patient health information gen-

electronic records

erated in any point in the health-care system, such as a hospital, clinic, home health or long-term-care facility, such as a nursing home. The records include important information such as patient demographics, progress notes, medical history, medications, radiology images, immunizations and laboratory data.

"When everything is implemented, access to information will be much quicker and easier for health-care providers and ultimately improved quality of care," said Ryan Stover, chief financial officer at the hospital.

An electronic health record system enables providers to quickly and easily access a comprehensive view of demographic, historical and clinical information about a patient from all places where that person gets care. The system's unique, single-patient chart is accessible in real time, creating operational efficiencies, improved departmental and organization communication, and reducing cost by more effectively managing records and optimizing reimbursement while ensuring compliance with federal regulations. The electronic record format also reduces paper use.

"We're going paperless or as much as possible," said Nuhfer, "and it is a secure system."

The electronic health record system will allow the hospital to improve its processes and increase efficiency, according to Nuhfer.

The expected savings in time and cost will be good for both the patients and the hospital, even though the hospital has invested over \$1 million in the system.

In addition, the hospital is considering plans to renovate the upper level, which includes the surgery recovery area, Miller said. The architectural design is complete and the construction manager for the project has established a guaranteed maximum cost of \$5.4 million. The hospital board is discussing whether to go forward with the renovations. If approved, "it will improve access to care and services," said Miller.

Currently, the Hospital has three physicians and three midlevel practitioners who see patients:

- Dr. Glenda Maurer, a medical doctor specializing in family practice and obstetrics.
- Dr. Jeffery McKinley, an osteopathic physician specializing in family practice and obstetrics.
- Dr. Martin Griffey, an osteopathic physician specializing in internal medicine.
- Jonna Inman, a nurse practitioner.
- Julie Siefers, a physician assistant.
- Kristin Vogel, a physician assistant.

Other services offered in Norton County area

Norton County offers services from health-care providers and organizations including chiropractors, dentists, eye specialists, massage therapy and other treatment. Here's a sampling:

Chiropractic Care

• Peterson Chiropractic and Acupuncture: Dr. R.A. Peterson's office is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. The office is also open on Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The clinic offers traditional chiropractic care, needle and laser acupuncture, laser therapy, medical testing and kinesiology, along with other services.

• Norton Chiropractic Clinic: Dr. Craig Rogers provides chiropractic services at the clinic Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to noon and 3 to 6 p.m., on Fridays from 7 a.m. to noon and Saturdays by appointment. The clinic offers traditional chiropractic care, along with pain management and acute care, wellness care and injury prevention, allergy testing, blood screens, X-rays, physical rehabilitation and therapy, electronic acupuncture and sports injury rehab services.

Dental Care

• Mark Klein Dentistry: Dr. Mark Klein provides dental care in Norton Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Fridays from 8 a.m. to noon. The office closes from noon to 1 p.m. on Mondays. It is accepting new patients and takes walk-in appointments as time allows. The office provides general dentistry, dentures, extractions and preventative care.

• Centre Sky Dentistry: Dr. Craig Krizek's office is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Now accepting new patients, the office offers general dental care, along with restorative and preventative care.

• Lamont Shirk, D.D.S.: Dr. Lamont Shirk's office is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The practice is accepting new patients by appointment for preventative, comprehensive and restorative care. Some oral surgery ser-

See SERVICES, Page 14

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- Martin Griffey, D.O.
- Glenda Maurer, M.D.
- Jeffery McKinley, D.O.
- Jonna Inman, APRN
- Julie Siefers, PA-C
- Kristin Vogel, PA-C

— Family Practice

— Emergency Coverage — Obstetrics — Internal Medicine

The Norton County Hospital is in the process of converting all of its patient health care information from paper documents to a digital format called EHR, or electronic health record.

The electronic health record solution will allow Norton County Hospital to improve its processes and increase efficiency. The expected savings in time and cost will benefit both the patients and the hospital.



Norton County Hospital

102 East Holme,
Norton, Kansas

Hospital: 785-877-3351 — Clinic: 785-877-3305

- An electronic health record solution enables healthcare providers to quickly and easily access a comprehensive view of demographic, historical and clinical patient information from all care settings.
- The system's unique single patient chart is accessible in real time --
- Creating operation efficiencies
- Improve departmental and organization communication
- Reduce cost by more effectively managing patient records
- Optimizing reimbursement while ensuring regulatory compliance

"PRN" Home Health Agency

- Skilled Nursing Services
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Requesting help is the first step. One of our Home Health RN's will come to you and your family to evaluate which program best fits your needs.

Norton County Health Department

- Immunizations
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

- Pre and Postnatal Home Visits
- Blood Pressure Checks
- Maternal and Infant Program
- Bi-annual Blood Screenings
- Hearing Checks
- Salvation Army Donations and Request for Assistance Site
- Disease Prevention
- TB Skin Testing
- Blood Lead Testing
- Dental Hygienist Services-(Eligibility Requirements)
- Home and Community Based Services

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
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Other health care services offered in Norton

SERVICES, from Page 13

Services are offered, along with endodontics and some orthodontic services.

Eye Care

• **Cole Family Eyecare:** Dr. Ben Cole provides eye-care services from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8 a.m. to noon Fridays. The practice is accepting new patients and takes walk-in appointments as time allows. Available are eye exams, glasses and contact lenses, along with treatment of eye diseases like glaucoma and macular degeneration.

Elderly Care/Retirement

• **Whispering Pines:** Whispering Pines offers assisted living and independent retirement, with one- and two-bedroom apartments for singles and couples. The facility is licensed through the state and Medicaid-approved. It offers 24-hour staff supervision, meals, cleaning services, common areas and laundry services. Each resident is screened for individual needs and may be placed in level 1 or level 2 care, depending on health and personal needs.

• **Andbe Home:** The Andbe Home in Norton is a full-service skilled nursing facility with 73 beds. The facility has 117 full- and part-time workers. Along with 24-hour care, the Andbe Home provides day and respite care and 20 independent-living apartments. Residents have access to scheduled and spon-

taneous activities, meals, medication management and administration, outpatient physical therapy, speech therapy and a special unit for those who require one-on-one care. The home is full and typically operates at 98 percent occupancy.

Mental/Developmental Health Care

• **Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas:** This organization provides in-home and employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. It serves 18 counties and operates two group homes in Norton. One houses six clients and the other five, and both are full. The organization also serves people in their own homes.

• **High Plains Mental Health** serves the 20 counties of northwest Kansas. In 2010, it served more than 5,200 clients. The staff provides psychotherapy for children, adults, families and couples, along with case management. Though mental health is often covered under insurance, uninsured or underinsured clients qualify for a sliding fee scale, depending on income and financial need. The main office is in Hays, but branch offices are located throughout the region, including one in Norton.

Public Health

• **Norton County Health Department:** The Norton County Health Department, supported partly by tax dollars, provides health and wellness services for county citizens, including

immunizations and Women-Infants-Children services for families. Other services provided at the clinic are blood-pressure checks, maternal and infant programs, hearing screening, disease prevention and testing. Some of the services are offered with need-based fees and others for a flat rate.

• **PRN Home Health Agency:** PRN Home Health Agency provides services to Norton County residents in their home to help them stay there safer and longer than what they could without such help. The staff consists of registered nurses, a licensed practical nurse and certified home health aides. Some of the services provided include bathing, cleaning, meal prep, medication box management, errands, foot care, wound care, IVs and health education. They accept Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, Area Agency on Aging and private payment for these services. Contact them for eligibility at (785) 877-5745.

Addiction Treatment

• **Valley Hope:** With an office and treatment center in Norton, Valley Hope offers in-patient treatment to help people overcome alcohol and drug addiction. It operates in seven states, based on the American Society of Addiction Medicine's placement criteria for admission, residency and discharge. Services include detoxification, residential, outpatient and continuing care and evaluations and as-

sessments. Admissions are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Hospice/End of Life Care

• **Hospice Services Inc.:** Based in Phillipsburg, Hospice Services provides end-of-life care for clients in 16 counties of northwest Kansas. With 20 clinical staff and many volunteers, the agency provides palliative care for 20 clients each year in Norton County but closer to 200 over the entire area. It is accepting new clients and new volunteers, and anyone interested in either should call (800) 315-5122.

Pharmacy

• **Moffet Drug Store:** Owned and operated by Chase and Abby Rice. Chase has a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. He is helped by Steve Vollertsen, a registered pharmacist. The store offers mail-out services and free delivery. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

• **Shopko Pharmacy:** Erica Ojeda, the store's pharmacist, has a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. The store offers mail outs, free delivery and vaccinations and serves the nursing home and assisted living facilities. Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Movement therapy can help prevent chronic disease

By Brenda Mazanec

The Colby Free Press
movementconnection@st-tel.net

What are you doing to prevent the onset of chronic disease? How can you support the efforts of your family physician? Complementary health practices can make a significant difference in the way you look, feel, and experience life.

The No. 1, most widely recommended practice to prevent chronic disease is movement. Keep moving!

Exercise is simple and easy for all ages and physical abilities, whether you join a gym or create your own activities. Exercise helps control weight, decreases the risk of disease, stimulates brain activity, increases "feel good" chemicals, energizes and helps with sleep. Exercise promotes proper posture and aids in all body system functions: respiratory, digestive, skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular, nervous, etc.

Movement is therapeutic. Movement activities are social. Movement can take on many forms. Find an activity you enjoy, and with just 30 minutes of physical activity a day, you could be changed forever.

• What have you eaten today? If you wrote everything down you had eaten, would you be embarrassed to share the list? A diet rich in nutrients supplies the fuel our bodies need for peak performance.

The next time you take a flight, you better hope the jet is adequately fueled. The same should be true for our bodies. Choose nutrient-dense foods, packed with vitamins and minerals. Vegetables and fruits come in a rainbow of colors, and we should enjoy eating a variety of colors. Choose whole grains. Choose fresh over packaged food and drink

plenty of water.

• Sleep at least seven hours a night. It's a natural way to rejuvenate and restore balance within our body system.

A nutritious diet, adequate sleep and exercise are great personal commitments to prevent disease. What about stress? Stress is a menacing obstacle when the human body is trying to obtain a healthy state and is the underlying cause of many diseases. Physical activity, proper nutrition and rest all help with stress. Consider, however, the additional benefits of meditation, Reiki, therapeutic massage and reflexology.

• A meditation practice allows you time to relax and get oxygen not only to the brain but to those areas where we carry our stress. We can go without food and water for some time, but without oxygen and breathing, we would cease to exist. Meditation is a different experience for each individual, but the peace and acceptance felt after a session is energizing. Lowering blood pressure and heart rate, strengthening the immune system, pain management, weight loss, problem solving, boosting motivation, decreasing anxiety, and many more, are benefits of meditation.

• Reiki, an effective complementary health practice, less known in the Midwest, is reported to be offered as a regular service in over 800 U.S. hospitals. It is best described as energy work. When energy flows freely and unrestricted in the body, you are less likely to get sick.

Reiki clears, straightens and heals the pathways, allowing energy to flow in a natural way. A certified Reiki practitioner will offer personal sessions for pain reduction, stress reduction, emotional well being and healing.

• The skin is the largest sense organ in the human body. Therapeutic massage improves circulation, lowers stress

levels, relieves muscle tension and promotes relaxation through touch. Different types of massage techniques are designed to promote natural healing.

• Reflexology is used around the world as a complementary health practice. Reflexologists apply pressure to specific points and areas on the feet, hands or ears, with the belief that these areas and reflex points correspond to different body organs and systems. The pressure creates a beneficial effect on the organs, improving circulation, promoting detoxification, reducing tension, and promoting general health and natural healing.

• "Look-up!" This simple statement holds a multitude of meanings. Physically, by looking up, we automatically sit or stand a little taller, align our ear with our shoulder and improve our posture, giving all our internal organs more room. Looking up activates and engages the eyes in depth perception and focus. Spiritually and emotionally, looking up, we can express gratitude. Positive, happy thoughts contribute to healthy bodies.

If living your life to its full capacity is a goal, consider incorporating some of these complementary health practices into your schedule. Preventive and complementary services are typically lower in cost and time in comparison to treatment of a chronic disease that could possibly be prevented.

Brenda Mazanec is the owner and manager of the Movement Connection in Colby. She has degrees in health, physical education and recreation, and regular and vocational family and consumer science. Contact her at (785) 462-2044 or 443-4010 or movementconnection@st-tel.net

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Sheridan Health new sleep study and

By R.B. Headley

Colby Free Press
rbheadley@nwkans.com



Sheridan County Health Complex
• Beds – 18 as critical access hospital.
• Revenue 2013 – \$7,212,940.
• Profit 2013 – \$93,567.
• County Money – \$955,711.
• Providers – Five part-time contract doctors, one part-time nurse practitioner, three full-time physician assistants and three consulting specialists.
• Administrator – Jim Wahlmeier.
• Phone – (785) 675-3281.

The Sheridan County Health Complex has delivered good things in threes, buying a new automated medication system, implementing a sleep-study program and starting home-based clinic visits earlier this year.

Administrators and staff are thrilled about the successful installation of an automated dispensing cabinet for medications and supplies.

“It’s instrumental in achieving better patient care,” said Chief Financial Officer Christine Niblock and Director of Nursing Regina Dinkel.

“Everything is right here, so we never have to leave the patient,” Dinkel said. “It will definitely help with work flow.”

The Pyxis CareFusion MedSystem is the newest version of an automated dispensing system available on the market, she said. By scanning the special bar code on a patient’s arm band, the machine knows exactly what medication doctors have ordered for that patient.

“We can take medication right to the nurses’ fingertips and know the patient is receiving the proper medication in the right amount at the right time,” said hospital pharmacist Leisha Jones. “This will help prevent any potential human errors in the administration of medicine to our patients.”

Dinkel, a registered nurse, said the machine helps the hospital meet government standards in electronic technology. That ensures that the Hoxie facility will be part of government insurance programs, which means it gets proper reimbursement for services to patients.

“Technology is the buzzword these days,” Dinkel said.

Meditech programmer Christy Pemberton has been a key contributor to putting this new system to work. A Hoxie High graduate, she

worked at the hospital throughout her high school years, then returned to work as a full-time registered nurse.

Hospital staff began working with the Pyxis system this month. It officially “goes live” in February at both the Acute Care and Emergency Room nursing stations.

Meanwhile, a new sleep studies program should awaken an enthusiasm for patients. A road trip to Hays or Garden City for this service will no longer be necessary, Chief Executive Officer Jim Wahlmeier said.

Sleep studies are important because untreated disorders can raise the risks of heart disease and high blood pressure, as well as stroke and other medical conditions. Sleep disorders have been linked to car accidents and increased possibilities of injuries, such as falling.

Doctors might be able to diagnose a sleep disorder based on sleep schedules and habits. However, results from sleep studies and other medical tests may be needed.

Contact the complex for details about this



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complex starts home-based clinic



Sheridan County Health Complex Meditech programmer Christy Pemberton (left) and director of nursing Regina Dinkel took a good look at the new Pyxis CareFusion MedSystem in the facility’s main emergency room.

– Photo by R.B. Headley/Colby Free Press

new service.

The third new service involves home visits for patients who are unable to make it into the clinic for an appointment. Wahlmeier said home visits will be available to all established patients who are part of the Medicare insurance program.

Home visits offer the same services as an office call: the ability to assess medical conditions, make referrals, draw blood for lab tests and prescribe medications.

The home visits may also involve post-operative checks, check-ups, hospital follow-ups or sick visits.

Home visits can be scheduled through the

Hoxie Medical Clinic by calling (785) 675-3018. Heather Mauck, a nurse practitioner, or physician assistants Dylan DeVries and Kelly Rezac make the house calls during the week.

Physician assistant Aaron McKinney will take weekend call coverage at the Critical Access Hospital.

All these new services will help the Sheridan County Health Complex achieve a primary goal to spend more quality time on patient care.

“We truly love our patients,” Dinkel said. “Becoming more efficient allows us to spend that extra quality time with them. We go out of our way to treat our patients like family.”



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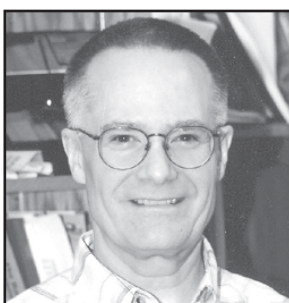
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New administrator joins Goodland hospital

By Pat Schiefen

*The Goodland Star-News
pschiefen@nwkans.com*

Goodland Regional Medical Center has a new leader for the first time in decades. Marion "Tony" Thompson became the chief executive officer of the hospital in November, and in December, he and his wife Carolyn moved from Cherokee Village, Ark.

Thompson said of Goodland, "that it is a wonderful opportunity for him to be part of a healthy organization."

He said people have been warm and welcoming and he has been getting out and introducing himself. Goodland's strength is in the community and what it offers for the family.

The hospital is geographically located to be successful, he said. With the small labor pool, however, qualified people need to be brought in from the outside.

"The hospital is blessed with a large group of providers," said Thompson, adding that it has about 37 visiting doctors in 20 fields covering everything from cancer to mental health.

Goodland Regional is a 25-bed critical access hospital, he said. Critical access hospitals were implemented in the late 1980s to '90s by the federal government because changes at that time in how hospitals got paid put small rural hospitals at a disadvantage. The program was an attempt to enable rural hospitals to survive.

These small hospitals were capped at 25 beds. People could stay no more than three days in acute care and then had to be moved to "swing" beds. Actually they really don't move the patients, Thompson said; they just change the designation on the computer. All of the rooms, acute or swing-bed, are included in the 25-bed total.

Thompson said he would like to see the center be a true community hospital, offering the services that people need. That would cut out the need for people to travel elsewhere to get care.

One goal is to attract future moms to have their babies at the New Beginnings Birthing Center, he said. The birth of a baby is one of the happy outcomes of going to a hospital, he added, and it brings joy to everyone who works at the hospital. He said officials want to start having a lullaby chime when a baby is born.

When the hospital can give good care to moms the family usually follows when they need care.

The recruitment of Dr. Kali Rubenthaler and Dr. Heather Licke, who will start in September, will help strengthen the hospital's assets in family practice and women's health.

Then he said he would like the hospital to be able to provide the medical services a family might need, such as having tonsils removed. The hospital has been checking into what equipment and training it would need for that.



Goodland Regional Medical Center
• Number of Beds – 25 as a critical access hospital.
• Revenue 2013 – \$14,089,278.
• Loss 2013 – \$2,120,676.
• County Money – \$450,574.
• County Money 2013 – \$451,000.
• Providers – Four family-practice physicians, an internist, a pediatrician and one nurse practitioner, about 37 visiting specialists.
• Administrator – Tony Thompson.
• Phone Number – (785) 890-3625.

Another effort to respond to people's needs was the start of the High Plains Dialysis Service, Thompson said, especially after the closure of the DaVita Dialysis Center in Burlington. This service has four stations which will allow eight patients to get the care they need each day without having to make a 220-mile round trip.

With Jack Lucas wanting to slow down, the hospital has a possible recruit for the physical therapy department, said Thompson. Lucas is retirement age but does not plan on totally quitting.

The hospital's association with the Midwest Cancer Alliance at the University of Kansas has increased the its ability to provide services for cancer patients without long-distance travel. The hospital has an oncology unit with two stations where people can receive chemotherapy. Thompson said he would like to see it expanded to four.

"We need to take care of patients," he said. The center is an affiliate of Centura Health. An affiliation with them gives them support from a strong and vibrant network out of Denver, said Tina Goodwin, director of marketing for the hospital. A lot of patients that need to be transferred go to Denver and Centura is the largest hospital network in Denver.

Goodwin said Centura gives hospital staff more professional resources. A couple of examples include the information technology department and recruitment of a new chief executive officer. Centura has strengthened its outreach programs and is definitely making its ties to western Kansas stronger.


Before moving to Goodland, Thompson was the chief executive officer of the Fulton County Hospital by the Ozarks Medical

See ADMINISTRATOR, Page 20



Chris Fulwider, director of the respiratory therapy and cardiopulmonary rehab for Goodland Regional Medical Center, showed how his department tests pulmonary function with a "body box."

– Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News



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Oakley, Colby clinics share health care providers

Logan County Hospital has experienced many successes over the last year.

The hospital's Colby Medical Services clinic moved to a new location at 1005 S. Range in Colby and was certified as a rural health clinic in August.

Lee Woofter, director of the clinic, said certification involves applying to Medicare with supporting documents, waiting for approval to continue and finally, a survey, or inspection, to make sure the clinic meets federal and state requirements. The clinic's inspection, which covers everything from the building to personnel to medical policy and procedures, turned up no deficiencies, she said.

Now the clinic is eligible for a higher level of reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid, said Woofter, so patients may notice a difference on their bills. The level of care stays the same, she added.

Woofter added that recent staff increases mean the clinic is now open all day Wednesday, making its schedule all day Monday through Friday. The clinic has become a member of the National Health Service Corps, which helps provide better patient coverage for the uninsured and underinsured.

In 2010, New Frontiers Health Services in Oakley became the first provider-based rural health clinic owned and operated by the hospital. New Frontiers had been a member

Logan County Hospital

- Beds – 25 as critical access hospital, 45 long-term care.
- Revenue 2013 – \$15,073,487.*
- Loss 2013 – \$200,000.*
- County Money 2013 – \$270,000.
- Providers – two physicians, two physician assistants, three nurse practitioners.
- Administrator – Rudy Snedigar.
- Phone – (785) 672-3211.
- * unaudited.

of the corps for several years. The clinics complement each other by serving two areas' needs while sharing medical providers. The two work closely together, she said.

In March, Dr. John Herscher joined the medical staff, which also includes Dr. Celeste



The fitness center, about a year and a half old, continues to grow in popularity as people think more about health and fitness.

– Photo by Steve Allison/Logan County Hospital

Rains; Carl Woofter and Amanda Reid, physician assistants; and nurse practitioners Deanna Sulzman and Lynelle Fossum. In July, nurse practitioner Kyle Hodges was added to the staff.

"Recruiting a cohesive medical team was a goal achieved in 2013," said Nick Zerr, retention and recruitment director.

Another part of the operation, the Logan County Rehabilitation and Wellness Center celebrated its one-year anniversary in June. The tremendous growth at the center is appar-

ent, with new members every day using the pool and exercise equipment.

"The new aqua therapy services have also proven to be very beneficial to patients of the Logan County Hospital therapy department," said Gerry Baalmann, ancillary director of the center.

Baalmann said water aerobics classes and lap swimming are available in the pool, while the fitness center is primarily used for individual work.

"The Wellness Center has benefited the

community tremendously," Baalmann said, "as it has filled a gap in available services. The facility has treadmills, ellipticals, recumbent bikes, free weights and a four-station lifting machine.

"It's made the fitness-center members focus more on their health and wellness."

The Logan County Manor nursing home continues to be a pillar of the organization. It reported a profit for the year and continues to provide care and compassion to residents.

"We strive to be accommodating to our residents and their families," said Carol Boyd, the manor's director of nursing.

The hospital added new equipment in the emergency room, radiology and laboratory departments, including a Lifepak defibrillator for the emergency room, a portable X-ray unit and two pieces of testing equipment, an ACL Elite and an Architect 4100. These last two, said lab director Katie Chrisler, mean that tests won't have to be sent out to another lab.

The ACL Elite is a coagulation analyzer, Chrisler said, used for testing blood thinning and clotting disorders. The Architect 4100, a chemistry and immunochemistry instrument, can be used to diagnose health issues including anemia, thyroid, liver and kidney function, lipids and sugar, Chrisler said. She said the new machines have really helped their work.

"This new equipment, along with adding a new electronic medical record system, keeps this hospital moving toward the technology-filled future," said Marcia Kruse, the hospital's director of nursing.

Finally, the hospital ended the last quarter by hiring a new chief executive officer, Rudy Snedigar, who came from Missouri with 30-plus years of hospital administration experience. Snedigar may have to lead the team through some turbulent times in health care.

"I am very excited to be a part of this health system and work with this team," he said.



Lab Director Katie Chrisler (left) and Linley Andersen, a lab technician (above), used two new machines added to the laboratory equipment at the Logan County Hospital this year.

– Photos by Steve Allison
Logan County Hospital



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Many new things, people at Rawlins Health Center

By Ladd Wendelin

The Oberlin Herald
lwendelin@nwkansas.com

Last year at this time, the big question was “What’s next?” for the Rawlins County Health Center in Atwood.

Since then, everything is new, as the hospital has welcomed a new administrator, physician assistants, specialists and state-of-the-art laboratory equipment.

The hospital building itself has seen completion of renovations and expansion on the 60-year old hospital facility as part of a \$1.75 million, multi-year capital improvement project.

Sharon Karlin Cox, the new hospital chief executive officer and administrator, replaced the outgoing Deanna Freeman on Feb. 3.

Originally from Denver, Mrs. Cox is a board-certified fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. She earned a master’s degree in management from Regis University in Denver and a bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. She received a certification in negotiation skills from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Recently, she served as regional director of physician recruitment for Banner Health Systems.


In her free time, she said, she enjoys spending time with her family, husband Don, five grown children and eight grandchildren, friends, reading and travel. In the past, she has volunteered with the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra Guild and has served two Washington state gubernatorial appointments.

“I’m very excited to be at Rawlins County Health Center, and for Don and I to be a part of this wonderful community,” Mrs. Cox said.

Assisting Dr. Rodney Dill, who has seen Atwood patients for over 20 years, the hospital has added two new physician assistants who will join St. Francis native Michael Dorsch and Patrick Delano on the staff: the husband-and-wife team of Kyle and Barb Herspring, and Brandon Bailey, a nurse practitioner.

A native of Claflin, Mrs. Herspring has joined the hospital as a part-time physician assistant.

She received a master’s degree in physician



Rawlins County Health Center

- **Rawlins County Health Center**
- Beds – 24 as critical access hospital.
- Revenue 2013 – \$6,467,430.
- Profit 2013 – \$228,424.
- County Money – \$440,891.
- Providers – One doctor, four physician assistants, one nurse practitioner, five consulting specialists.
- Administrator – Sharon Cox.
- Phone – (785) 626-3211.

assistant studies from Wichita State University in 2008, and a bachelor’s degree from Kansas State University in management with a minor in Spanish and a certificate in international business.

Mr. Herspring, a native of Manhattan, has been a full-time physician’s assistant since 2010.

He is a graduate of Wichita State with a master’s in physician assistant studies, and also holds a Master of Science in kinesiology from Kansas State, where he obtained a bachelor’s degree in life sciences.

Mr. Bailey, a Topeka native, is a part-time nurse practitioner at the hospital. He received a master’s degree in nursing from the Kansas University Medical Center in Kansas City.

In addition, the hospital has added three new visiting cardiology specialists, Dr. Sean Denney, with Platte Valley Medical Group in Kearney; Dr. Mauricio Anaya with DeBakey Heart Institute in Hays; and Dr. Frederick Miller from Aurora Cardiology in Colorado.

People can schedule visits with the specialists by checking the calendar the hospital prints at the beginning of every month in the *Rawlins County Square Deal*, *The Oberlin Herald* and *The Colby Free Press*.

The hospital has added new equipment to its laboratory, including a Seimens Dimension EXL 200 chemical analyzer, which can



The emergency room entrance at the Rawlins County Health Center in Atwood was part of a \$1.75 million capital improvement project.

– Photo by Ladd Wendelin/The Oberlin Herald

instantly perform tests on more than one patient at a time, including cardiac, toxicology and general chemistry.


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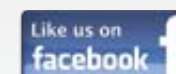


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Affordable Care Act utilize resources better

By Carolyn Plotts

The Oberlin Herald
c.plotts@nwkansas.com

It's been a full year since Jonathan Owens took the helm of the Decatur County Hospital and its management firm, Decatur Health Systems, a year that saw the hospital earning recognition as a top 20 Critical Access Hospitals in the nation.

Management attributed this honor to the high levels of performance by the entire staff.

Owens oversees the day-to-day management of the hospital and associated facilities, reporting directly to the county Hospital Board. He also acts as the main recruiter for the hospital, trying to find new doctors to practice in Oberlin. Dr. Allen Hooper remains the medical director of the hospital and its clinic.

With the Affordable Care Act, or "Obamacare," the hospital has seen some structural, business and financial changes, he says.

"Eventually, all health-care organizations will have to work together to provide services to care for each patient," Mr. Owens said, "and if you can't manage them with the resources given to you by the federal government, then it will affect your bottom line."

"It's been great," he said of his first year. "The community has been very accepting. I think they understand it's time for change in health care, and we're up to the challenge. It's



Decatur County Hospital

- Beds – 24 as Critical Access Hospital, 37 long-term nursing.
- Revenue 2013 – \$7,544,118.*
- Loss 2013 – \$367,792.
- County Money 2013 – \$200,000 for capital improvements.
- Providers – One physician, two nurse practitioners, one physician assistant, looking for more.
- Administrator – Johnathan Owens.
- Phone – (785) 475-2208.

*unaudited

more of a paradigm shift in terms of what is expected of us, in the way we take care of our patients.

"It makes it better for the patients and physicians," Mr. Owens said of the business and financial aspects of the transition, "so we're

You don't have to go far



There's no stopping Loren Schrock, a resident at the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center, who played harmonica, spoons and a mouth harp for his fellow residents. He was accompanied by his daughter, Cheryl Miller of Oberlin, on piano. – Photo by Ladd Wendelin/The Oberlin Herald

makes hospitals says Decatur CEO

using our money in a way to get better reimbursement and grow in the areas that the public expects us to.

"We believe if you provide better care, everybody wins. Whether or not the government is involved, that's how we work. So it's a big change, and hopefully one for the better."

During fiscal year 2013, Decatur Health experienced a 7.7 percent increase in inpatient revenue and a 16.6 percent increase in out-patient revenue. Chief Financial Officer Derick Lorentz explained the difference: "Out-patient revenue is generated by fees charged for lab work, physical therapy, IV treatments and emergency room treatment," he said, "while in-patient revenue comes from hospitalized patients, swing bed and observation patient care."

Mr. Lorentz said the year-to-date increase for the entire system, which includes the hospital, Cedar Living Center for skilled nursing care, Cottonwood Home Healthcare and the Family Practice Clinic, was 15 percent.

He said the hospital began seeing the impact of the Affordable Care Act as far back as March, when Medicare reimbursements were cut 3 percent. He said the hospital used to get 101 percent of its cost, allowing it to make a slight profit. Now, only 98 percent of expenses are reimbursed.

Sixty-two percent of patients seen by Decatur Health Systems, which includes the hospital, clinic, therapies and labs are on Medi-

care. Mr. Lorentz said hospitals are expected to make up their deficit from payments made by private insurers and self-pay patients.

"That might work in bigger places," he said, "but here, it's hard."

He added that the law would have no effect on how Medicare and Medicaid patients are treated. (Medicare is the federal health-insurance plan for seniors; Medicaid is a state-federal program covering low-income people.)

At the clinic, nurse practitioners Lynetta Ward and Tricia Carney were joined Feb. 5 by a physician assistant, Michael Dawson, a former fire chief and paramedic. He comes to Oberlin from Pueblo, Colo., and will maintain a varied schedule. Mr. Owens said he is always trying to recruit new doctors and hopes another physician assistant can be hired this summer. Dr. Robert Rosin left the clinic in February after more than a year.

Mr. Owens said that the goal of the hospital in the immediate future is to expand on services, particularly oncology, or cancer treatment; build on the provider base; and grow an endowment fund to help buy new equipment.

More recognition came to the operation when Lisa Votapka, dietary supervisor for the hospital and Cedar Living Center was elected president of a national organization, Association of Nutrition of Food Service Professionals. She will be installed in September.

See RESOURCES, Page 31

for health care in Oberlin

As Dorothy learned in the "Wizard of Oz," if you go looking for your heart's desire, you don't have to look much farther than your own back yard.

The same can be said for medical care. Decatur County has ample health-care options, including a dentist, optometrists, chiropractors, a full-time pharmacy and a home-health-care supply store.

Health Department

"It's just a little stick, and it protects us all," said Decatur County Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin on the importance of immunizations, which are available at the clinic Monday through from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday.

"People get kind of complacent," she said. "We don't see diphtheria, tetanus or polio, because we've eradicated them with vaccinations over the years. If we quit doing that, those diseases are going to come back."

Other services available include family planning, emergency preparedness, the state-federal Women, Infants and Children program, foot care and blood testing in the spring and fall, the Early Detection Works anti-cancer program, disease surveillance and investigation, a health fair every other year and child-care licensing inspections.

On the second Monday of every month, the department holds a blood-pressure clinic at the Golden Age Center. The department can administer shots to people on allergy maintenance and offers free mammograms for women over 50 who qualify.

The agency is supported by county tax dollars, state and federal grants and fees. Call (785) 475-8118 for information.

Chiropractors

A pain in the neck or a persistent back ache might be remedied with a trip to one of the county's two chiropractic services.

Peterson Chiropractic at 103 W. Wilson is operated by Dr. Robert Peterson of Norton who has been in business for 48 years. His Oberlin office will begin its 31st year, having opened in 1984, making him the longest practicing chiropractor in the area.

The office is open from 6 to 7 p.m. Mondays and 9 a.m. to noon Wednesdays. Appointments can be made by calling the Oberlin office at (785) 475-3576 during business hours, or by calling the Norton clinic toll-free at (877) 422-2324.

Dr. Ryan Unger and Dr. Shannon Addleman see patients at Unger Chiropractic Clinic.

See OBERLIN, Page 30



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OBERLIN, from Page 29

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Unger specializes in applied kinesiology, which is a nonforceful technique to determine nerve interference by testing muscle strength. Addleman specializes in the Thompson technique, which uses a table composed of segments that can be moved to various heights during adjustment.

Both of the doctors are Brimhall wellness practitioners. The clinic offers a low-level cold laser, allergy elimination techniques and detoxification. They offer neurofeedback, which uses computerized equipment to read brain waves to diagnose symptoms of migraine headaches, fibromyalgia, sleep disorders and attention deficit.

The support staff includes Kelly Wasson, Shelby Hackney, Sarah Orr, Denise Abbey and Darci Unger.

The clinic operates Monday through Friday during regular business hours and from 8 a.m. to noon two Saturdays a month.

Massage Therapists

Britta Spitzer, a professional massage therapist, is available at the Unger clinic five days a week and one Saturday a month. Call the clinic at (785) 475-2219 to make an appointment.

Trish Henningsen of Henningsen Thera-

peautic Massage, 407 E. Ash, offers Swedish massage, deep tissue massage and reflexology in Oberlin and Atwood. Hours are 1 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Nursing Homes

The county has two county-owned nursing homes, Cedar Living Center, attached to the Decatur County Hospital and the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center on Penn Avenue north of downtown.

Cedar Living has 36 beds, with 27 residents right now. The staff has activities for the residents, including sing-alongs, religious services, crafts, birthday parties, holiday celebrations and bingo a couple of times a week.

In the last year, the center added a new bathing suite, or whirlpool, for the residents, made possible through fund raisers and donations for former residents.

The Good Samaritan Center, 108 E. Ash, has 45 beds and 38 residents. It is operated by the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society of Fargo, N.D., which runs about 240 facilities around the nation. The Oberlin home has been in operation since 1957.

Dentist

Fredrickson Family Dentistry, at 106 S. Rodehaver, owned and operated by Dr. Gary Fredrickson, offers general dental care for families, including fillings, crowns, partials and cosmetic whitening.

The office staff processes all insurance and he is a provider for Delta Dental and Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance.

Dr. Fredrickson said he encourages parents to start bringing kids in for their first check ups at age 3 and then once a year after that.

Adults need to come in once a year, even if they don't have cavities, to have their teeth cleaned and to prevent decay, he added.

Dr. John Haugen, an orthodontist from McCook, comes to the office once every eight weeks to see patients. Amy Wesley, a dental hygienist, is in the office on Mondays. The phone is (785) 475-3813.

Optometrists

Lifetime Eyecare, 105 S. Penn Ave., is a satellite office for a McCook optometry service operated by Dr. Dirk Gray and Dr. Robert Stamm.

The office offers visual screening, co-management for macular degeneration, cataract care, follow-ups for other eye surgeries, adjusting glasses, new glasses, contacts and other eye-care needs.

The doctors see patients in Oberlin from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. every Wednesday. Call (785) 475-1200.

Pharmacy

Ward Drug Store, the only pharmacy in the county, is at 142 S. Penn Ave. The store is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday

through Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays.

The store offers over-the-counter and prescription drugs and features a card and gift store that includes Kansas Jayhawks and K-State Wildcats merchandise.

Home Medical Supplies

Kelly's Home Medical at 104 S. Penn Ave. offers medical supplies and equipment, including walkers, canes, cybernetic robot exoskeletons, life recliners, hospital beds, wheel chairs, home oxygen, and continuous positive airway pressure (C-PAP) machines, sales, rentals and more.

Hours are noon to 6 p.m. on Mondays; 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays or by appointment. Call (785) 475-2685.

Cottonwood Home Healthcare

Decatur Health Systems offers Cottonwood Home Healthcare, which employs nurses who go into patients' homes to administer care.

Derick Lorentz, chief financial officer for the hospital, said the nurses help patients with everything from everyday care to making sure their medications are set for the week.

Administrator and registered nurse Tammy Touslee said the nurses specialize in wound care, IV therapy, disease management and prescription drug education.

Cottonwood currently serves four counties,

around Oberlin

Decatur, Rawlins, Norton and Sheridan. Most of the clients use Medicare to pay for the services, although the service accepts private insurance and cash.

For more information, call (785) 475-2124.

Wheat Ridge Terrace Senior Apartments

Decatur Health Systems owns and operates Wheat Ridge Terrace, said Mr. Lorentz, an apartment complex that provides independent

living for adults. There are 12 apartments, with one- and two-bedroom units, however, at this time, there is only one vacancy, said Manager Teresa Shaughnessy,

Lunch is provided, but otherwise, residents are responsible for their own meals. For information, call (785) 475-1000.

Hospitals must use resources better

RESOURCES, from Page 29

One of the newest pieces of equipment at the hospital is a machine called a "body box" by the staff. The official name is body plethysmograph. Used in the respiratory health department, its primary function is to diagnose lung disease. After a diagnosis, it can be used to determine if treatments are effective and how the patient is progressing.

"It's nice to offer the service closer to home," said Deb Klima, a registered respiratory therapist. "We're one of the few small hospitals that offers the pulmonary function test."

The "body box" was purchased with money raised at the hospital's golf tournament last year. Eight new hospital beds for acute-care rooms also were purchased with money raised

at that event.

On the "wish list" for the hospital is a \$100,000 automatic medication dispenser. Mr. Lorentz said the electronic medication dispenser the hospital uses now was purchased in 2003 and is becoming outdated.

Mr. Lorentz said the the success of Decatur Health Systems is based on the quality people who work there.

"We have a very well-rounded staff," he said.

One of the larger employers in the county, Decatur Health Systems (including the Family Practice Clinic) employs 60 people at the hospital, 16 at Cedar Living Center and three at Cottonwood Home Health for a total of 79 employees, Mr. Lorentz said.

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Andy PA-C Brian PA-C Trish APRN Luetta APRN Jenny APRN Tina APRN

Colby hospital is

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@gmail.com



Citizens Medical Center

- Number of Beds – 25, as critical access hospital.
- Revenue in 2013 – \$41,587,565.
- Net Income 2013 – \$368,302.
- Tax support – None, private, nonprofit hospital.
- Doctors – five physicians, five nurse practitioners, three physician assistants, one certified nurse anesthetist, 30 consulting physicians.
- Administrator – Kevan Trenkle.
- Phone – (785) 462-7511.

Colby's hospital is taking on an increased caseload and giving more back to the community since expanding its operations last winter.

The Family Center for Health Care, operated along with the hospital, Citizens' Medical Center, by Citizens' Medical Center Inc., started expanding its operation last winter. In the last year, 20 employees have joined the clinic and the hospital, including two new doctors, said Scott Focke, clinic manager.

Dr. Kelly Gabel, a general surgeon, and his wife, Dr. Sarah Gabel, a family practitioner, arrived in the fall. They were among six new health-care providers the center has room for after an addition was completed last year, adding 7,200 square feet to the building.

Also among those new providers are a full-time speech pathologist, Jesse Guajardo, and Callie Krajewski, a full-time occupational therapist. Brandon Bailey, a nurse practitioner, has started working in the emergency room 46 weekends a year to take some of the workload off other practitioners and the doctors.

Another husband-and-wife team, Dan and Kara Kuhlman, will start in September, Focke said. Both will be working as family practice doctors, Kara Kuhlman specializing in obstetrics and Dan Kuhlman with an interest in pain management. A sixth new provider will be here within a year.

Before Kelly Gabel arrived, the hospital had no full-time surgeon, said Kile Magner, director of surgery. Since he started in September, Magner said, Gabel has performed 41 surgeries, including 10 emergency trauma surgeries on patients who would otherwise have had to be flown to another city, like Hays or Denver.

“It's safe to say you've exponentially increased their chances of survival,” Magner said.

During trauma surgeries, which might happen after a farm or car accident, the patient's

life depends on a surgeon to stop internal bleeding, he said. A surgery done during the first “golden hours” after such an accident is most likely to save a life. Vickie Duffey, director of nursing services for the hospital, pointed out that a flight team from Denver can take up to two hours to get here.

Now that Colby can have emergency surgeries, the hospital has added a “special care unit” – similar to an intensive care unit at a larger hospital – to look after patients in serious condition. Nurses have been trained to provide critical care, learning to use the hospital's arterial pressure-monitoring machine and a ventilator used on patients of all ages.

“Those patients that are more critical we could not have cared for before,” Magner said, “now we can.”

The hospital, meanwhile, has added over \$300,000 worth of new surgical equipment, although some trauma patients, and others

Thomas County residents

By Sam Dieter

Colby Free Press
sdieter@nwkshealthcare.com

From its hospital and medical clinic to living facilities for older people, a wide range of health-care options exist in Colby.

Citizens Medical Center and the Family Center for Health Care employ five doctors. Dr. Kelly Gable started last fall as a general surgeon who also can perform trauma surgeries on patients who have been in accidents. His wife Dr. Sarah Gabel, specializes in women's reproductive health, or obstetrics. She can perform endometrial ablations, diagnostic hysteroscopies, minimally invasive tubal ligation replacement and other procedures which treat uterine conditions. Also working

at the hospital are Dr. John Dygert, Dr. Darren Matchell and Dr. Brewster Kellogg.

The hospital plans to add family practice doctors Dan and Kara Kuhlman, another husband-and-wife team, in September, said clinic manager Scott Focke.

Colby Medical Services, owned by the Logan County Hospital, has one doctor. For years, the clinic was known as Colby Medical and Surgical Center, until the death of Dr. Victor Hildyard in the summer of 2012. Logan County purchased the clinic on Sept. 4 of that year. The name was changed, although day-to-day operations stayed the same. The clinic moved from its old building to its current location next to Vision Source, and added Dr. John Herscher in March.

The clinic also employs Physician Assis-

serving more patients since expansion

with severe health problems, still have to go to another city or state for some surgeries.

Sarah Gabel specializes in women's reproductive health, or obstetrics. She can perform an endometrial ablation, a diagnostic hysteroscopy, a minimally invasive tubal ligation replacement and other procedures which treat uterine conditions.

In the last year, one staff member became qualified as a diabetes instructor. The hospital has also added a 3D 40 ultrasound machine and a manometry testing machine to determine if a patient can swallow properly. This makes Colby the only hospital to offer this test between Denver and Salina.

Citizens has 30 specialists from other areas who travel to Colby to perform various procedures and/or see patients.

Kevan Trenkle, chief executive officer for the hospital, estimates that over the last year, the hospital has seen a five to six percent increase in the number of outpatients coming in for non-emergency procedures who otherwise might have gone to another provider. Focke said people from nearby counties are coming to Colby instead of going to larger cities.

“We're definitely treating a larger geographic area than we would have in the past,” he said.

Plans were put in place for the expansion several years ago, he said, when the board changed the hospital's mission and vision statements to say Citizens Medical Center should be the best hospital in the region to work for and to go to for treatment. Hospital employees requested that change, he added.

“It came up from the grassroots of the facility,” Trenkle said.

Focke added that by turning itself into the best employer for medical staff, the hospital has doubtlessly added to the county's economy. Those 20 new employees make an average of \$75,000 a year, he said, and many of them moved to Colby with their families.

“The idea is basically we're following the mission and vision of our organization,” Focke said. “In order to do that, you've got to



Amanda Lange talked about one of the ultrasound machines being used at Citizens Medical Center.

– Photo by Sam Dieter/Colby Free Press

bring in the right people, the right services and you got to fund it.”

The hospital is still about \$140,000 short of the \$1.9 million fund-raising goal it set in the spring of 2011 to break even after the expansion, he said. Unlike other hospitals in

the area, the hospital operates entirely without tax dollars. He pointed out that this is the first time since the hospital was built in the early 1980s that it has asked for donations.

The hospital also has decreased “hospital harm” to patients, such as falls or readmis-

sions, by 40 percent. A three-year initiative to improve customer service could soon make it eligible for federal money through the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey.

have many options when it comes to medical services

tants Amanda Reed and Carl Wofter and nurse practitioners Deanna Sulzmann and Kyle Hodges. All of the providers except Sulzmann also work at Logan County Hospital and New Frontiers Health Services in Oakley.

Citizens has 30 out-of-town specialists who work out of the hospital. They include Dr. Michael Yalz, allergy and immunology; Dr. Christine Fisher cardiology; Angie Witman, counseling services; Dr. Theo Alkousaikis, dermatology; Dr. Jeffery Huston, gastroenterology; Drs. Sameli Abuerreish and January Fields, hematology and oncology; Dr. Khoi Pham, neurology; Drs. William Clifford and William Keats, ophthalmology; Drs. Rejesh Bazaz, Timothee Birney, Admodios Hatzidakis, James Holmes, Sakeban Lee, Kevin Nagamani, Ted Parks and Vivek Sharma, orthopedics; Dr. Jerrold Cossette, otolaryngology; Dr. Conrad Tirre, plastic surgery; Drs. Steven Laren and James Reeves, podiatry; Dr. Najd Kobitarty, pulmonary; Dr. David S. Kornman, rheumatology; Dr. Charles Frankum, general surgery; Drs. Wallace M. Curry and Darrell Werth, urology; and Dr. Stephen Anest, vascular surgeon.

Thomas County has three dentists who work in Colby:

Dr. Scott G. Haas works at 770 S. Range Ave. Dr. Karen A. Thummel and dental hygienist Park Christi work at 480 W. Fourth St., and Dr. Thomas Barlow works at 505 N. Franklin Ave.

Five chiropractors operate in Colby:

Dr. Lucas J. Tubbs and Dr. Shane M. Franz have Franz and Tubbs Chiropractic at 135 W.

Sixth St.; Dr. Cynthia J. Duffey works at 320 N. Lake Ave.; and Dr. Amanda J. Griggs, and Dr. Eric Q. Griggs operate Northwest Kansas Chiropractic at 770 S. Range Ave.

There are three pharmacies in Colby:

Palace Drug Store at 460 N. Franklin Ave., Dillons Pharmacy at 1605 S. Range Ave., and Walmart Pharmacy at 115 W. Willow Ave.

At 105 E. College Dr., Deseret Nursing and Rehab is a skilled nursing and long-term rehab center. It has 45 beds and employs a total of 54 staff, including 34 nursing staff.

L+C Home Health Agency Inc. at 160 E. Second St., has two nurses, Shawna Petersen, a licensed practical nurse, and Karly Brown, certified nurse assistant, who see patients in Thomas, Sheridan, Logan, Rawlins, Gove, Decatur, Sherman and Graham counties. They

provide nursing services such as wound care, IV and catheter insertion and injections. The agency also does home-health services such as bathing and hygiene services, vital signs assessment and light housekeeping.

The Prairie Senior Living Complex at 1625 S Franklin Ave. is operated by Citizens Medical Center Inc. It has a staff of 75 and 63 beds. Of the residents, 13 are Alzheimer's patients who get a higher level of care and are kept together.

Fairview Estates Retirement, 1630 Sewell Ave., is an assisted and independent living facility with 49 residents and about 20 staff.

Cheyenne County registered nurse

By Karen Krien

The Saint Francis Herald
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About 8.3 percent of the population, or 25.8 million children and adults, have diabetes. The 2011 National Diabetes fact sheet says around seven million people have the disease but don't know it and 79 million are pre-diabetics.

Because of the increasing number of cases — 1.9 million in 2010 — Mila Bandel, a registered nurse and director of the Cheyenne County Health Department, has organized informational meetings for people with diabetes, which are held about nine times a year. Speakers talk about healthy interactions with diabetes, new treatment approaches, carbohydrate counting, preventing and treating hypoglycemia and sampling foods and beverages.

For more on the classes, contact Mrs. Bandel at (785) 332-2381.

Below are recipes she has submitted which are not only healthy but also contain information including the carb count.

Meat-loaf muffins with barbecue sauce
1 1/2 lb. lean ground beef
3/4 cup oatmeal or dry bread or cracker crumbs
1/4 cup wheat bran
1 can (5.4 oz) 2 percent evaporated milk
1 egg
1 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper

Barbecue Sauce
1 cup ketchup
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
2 Tbsp. brown sugar

Preheat oven to 375°F
12 cup muffin tin, greased
1. Meat loaf muffins: In a large bowl, combine ground beef, oatmeal, bran, milk, egg, chili powder, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Divide mixture evenly among muffin cups, pressing down lightly.
2. Barbecue sauce: In another bowl, com-

bine ketchup, onion and sugar. Spoon about 1 Tbsp. sauce over each muffin.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until meat is no longer pink in center.

Per serving: Calories 396, dietary fiber 3 g, carbohydrate 29 g, fat 19 g, protein 27 g.

Tips: 1) Instead of making the sauce, substitute 1 cup of your favorite prepared barbecue sauce.

2) If your kids don't like onion pieces in the sauce, substitute 1/4 tsp onion or garlic powder. Limit use of onion and garlic salt, as they add unnecessary sodium. 3) Adding wheat bran is a great way to boost the flavor content of meat loaf, meatballs and hamburgers. Use about 1/4 cup per 1 1/2 pound ground meat. Adding canned evaporated milk or skim-milk powder helps to increase calcium.

Best-ever chocolate cookies
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt
2 eggs
1 cup margarine or butter, softened
3/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 1/2 cups quick-cooking rolled oats
1 cup bran cereal (not flakes)
3/4 cup white chocolate chips
1. In a small bowl, sift flour, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt.

2. In a large bowl, beat eggs, margarine and brown sugar. Fold in flour mixture. Stir in oats, bran cereal and chocolate chips.

3. Drop dough by heaping tablespoonfuls, about 2 inches apart, onto baking sheets.

4. Bake in preheated oven for 7 to 9 minutes or until just crisp. Let cool on baking sheets on a wire rack for 5 minutes, and then remove to rack to cool completely. Makes 42 cookies.

• Preparation time: 15 minutes. Cooking time: 7 to 9 minutes
• Preheat oven to 350°F

Per serving: calories 103, carbohydrate 11.8 g, calcium 20 mg, fat 6.0 g, fiber 1.3 g, iron 0.7 mg, sodium 116 mg, protein 1.6 g.

Tips: When using margarine, choose a non-hydrogenated version to limit consumption of trans fat.

Baked sweet potatoes and yam wedges
2 yams, peeled and cut into wedges
2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into wedges

2 Tbsp. Italian style herb blend
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste.

1. Place ingredients into a large bowl. Toss to coat potatoes with olive oil. Salt and pepper to taste.

2. Place wedges onto a parchment-lined baking sheet and put in a preheated 425-degree oven for about 30 minutes or until tender.

3. Serve eight.
Nutrition facts: Serving size 3-4 wedges, calories 120, total fat 4 g, saturated fat 1 g, cholesterol 0 mg, sodium 165 mg, carbohydrate 21g, dietary fiber 3g, protein 2g.

Reduced-fat cheesecake
12 graham crackers (2 1/2-inch squares), rolled into crumbs
2 cups low-fat cream cheese
1 cup fat-free sour cream
1/2 cup sugar or Splenda blend
2 tsp vanilla extract (or almond)
2 eggs
2 tsp grated lemon zest
• Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Wrap outside of 10-inch spring-form pan with heavy-duty foil. Coat the inside with nonstick cooking spray. Press graham crumbs into the bottom and partially up the sides of the pan.
• In large bowl, using an electric mixer on medium speed, beat cream cheese, sour cream, sugar and vanilla until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, until well blended. Stir in the lemon zest. Pour batter into pan.

• Set pan into a large roasting pan; pour boiling water into the roasting pan to about halfway up the sides of the spring-form pan. Bake until almost completely set, 30-35 minutes.

• Turn off the oven and prop door open. Leave cake in the oven for another 30 minutes. Transfer to rack and run knife around the edge to release the cake. Cool completely, then refrigerate, covered, until ready to serve.

Nutrition Facts (12 slices):
With sugar, calories 160, total fat 9g, satu-

rated fat 5g, cholesterol 60 mg, sodium 160 mg, carbohydrate 15 g, dietary fiber 0, protein 6g.

With Splenda blend, calories 150, carbohydrate 10g.

Angel-hair pasta with lemon-infused shrimp
4 cups cooked angel-hair pasta
2 cups medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
Juice from one large lemon
2 tps lemon zest
1 cup sliced mushrooms
2 garlic cloves, minced
6 green onions, chopped
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper
Extra virgin olive oil

1. Cook pasta as directed on package. Drain, rinse and set aside.

2. Heat a large sauté pan and add about 2 Tbsps of olive oil.

3. Add shrimp, green onions, mushrooms and garlic. Sauté for about 5 minutes.

4. Add lemon juice and lemon zest. Sauté for about 4 minutes.

5. Add angel hair pasta and gently mix to combine all ingredients.

6. Transfer pasta to a large serving platter. Sprinkle with Parmesan and pepper.

Makes four servings. Nutritional analysis: Serving, 1 cup pasta, 1/2 cup shrimp; calories 400; fat 12g, saturated fat 2.5g, cholesterol 135 mg, sodium 400mg, carbohydrates 45g, protein 28g.

Veggie, beef and pasta bake
Preheat oven to 350°F
13-by-9-inch baking dish, greased
1 lb. lean ground beef
1 cup sliced onions
1 cup diced zucchini
2 tsp. minced garlic
1 can (28 oz) stewed or diced tomatoes, with juice
2 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce
1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
2 cups rotini or other spiral pasta
1 1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese

organizes healthy and tasty recipes

1. In a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, combine ground beef, onions, zucchini and garlic; cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until beef is no longer pink and vegetables are softened. Drain fat; pour beef mixture into greased 13-by 9-inch baking dish. Set aside.

2. Meanwhile, drain juice from tomatoes into an 8-cup microwave-safe measuring cup, add water to make 2 cups. Coarsely chop

tomatoes; add to measuring cup. Stir in soy sauce and red pepper. Microwave on high for 5 minutes or until very hot. Stir in rotini.

3. Pour tomato-pasta mixture into baking dish and combine with meat mixture. Press pasta down to make sure it is submerged in the liquid. Bake in preheated oven, covered, for 20 minutes. Remove cover; stir gently and sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, for 15

to 20 minutes or until pasta is tender.

Nutrition per serving: calories 362, fiber 3 g, fat: 17 g, carbohydrate 26 g, protein 25 g. Serves six.

Tip: Here's a terrific recipe that makes a complete meal, with something from all the food groups. The pasta does not require any precooking, so you can save preparation and cleanup time.

If you are concerned about sodium, use reduced-sodium soy sauce instead of the regular variety. One tablespoon regular soy sauce contains 1,037 mg sodium; the same amount of reduced-sodium soy sauce contains only 605 mg.

Gluten-free recipes available for those in need

By Pat Schiefen

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The Goodland Star-News

More and more people are asking for gluten-free foods these days. Many start eating a diet free of gluten because they have an intolerance for the protein compound that causes inflammation of the small intestine.

This problem tends to run in families. Left undiscovered, it can cause more serious medical issues. One of these is celiac disease, a digestive disorder which damages the small intestine and hampers absorption of nutrients.

Gluten is formed by two proteins found in wheat, barley, rye and triticale (a cross between wheat and rye). Gluten is what gives bread its texture and chewiness. Wheat can include einkorn, emmer, spelt and kamut. The compound is also found in wheat starch, wheat bran, wheat germ, cracked wheat and hydrolyzed wheat protein. Other wheat products may include bromated flour, durum flour, enriched flour, farina, graham flour, phosphated flour, plain flour, self-rising flour, semolina and white flour.

Processed foods that may contain wheat, barley or rye include bouillon cubes, brown rice syrup, candy, potato chips, cold cuts, hot dogs, salami, sausage, communion wafers, French fries, gravy, imitation fish, matzo, rice mixes, sauces, seasoned tortilla chips, self-basting turkey, soups, soy sauce and vegetables in sauce. Products that do not have gluten are now being labeled, and if there are questions, check with the manufacturer. Sometimes foods that normally are gluten-free are processed in a factory that uses gluten for other things and are contaminated.

Things that do not have gluten are amaranth, arrowroot, buckwheat, cassava, corn, flax, Indian ricegrass, Job's tears (a tall grain-bearing tropical plant), legumes, millet, nuts, potatoes, quinoa, rice, sago (from tropical palm stems), seeds, sorghum, soy, tapioca, teff (an ancient North African cereal

grass), wild rice and yucca.

Some of the ingredients for these recipes will need to be purchased in a health food store.

Gluten-free pancakes
1 cup rice flour
3 tablespoons tapioca flour
1/3 cup potato starch
4 tablespoons dry buttermilk powder
1 packet sugar substitute
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon xanthan gum
2 eggs
3 tablespoons canola oil
2 cups water
Mix together in a bowl all the ingredients to the xanthan gum. Stir in eggs, water and oil until well blended and few lumps remain.
Heat a griddle or a large, well-oiled skillet over medium high heat. Spoon batter onto the griddle and cook until bubbles begin to form. Flip and continue cooking until brown on the bottom.
Serve with condiments of your choice.

Gluten-free sausage gravy
makes 16 servings
1 pound bulk pork sausage
1 cup unsalted butter
10 tablespoon gluten-free all-purpose baking flour
1 teaspoon salt
6 grinds black pepper
6 cups milk, divided
optional salt to taste
With the stove on medium-high, heat a large skillet and

cook the sausage until browned and crumbly. Drain and discard the grease. Reduce heat to low.

Stir butter into the sausage until melted. Then whisk in flour. Cook while whisking constantly until the gravy is the color of peanut butter. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Increase heat to medium and add 3 cups of milk. Bring to a simmer stirring constantly. Stir in the remaining 3 cups of milk, 1/4 cup at a time. Allow mixture to return to a simmer after each addition. Continue cooking until desired thickness is reached. Season with pepper and salt to taste.

Chocolate cake without flour
makes one 10-inch round cake
1/2 cup water
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup white sugar
18 (1 ounce) squares bittersweet chocolate
1 cup unsalted butter
6 eggs
Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Grease a 10-inch round cake pan and set aside.
Combine water, salt and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir until completely dissolved.

Melt the chocolate in the top half of a double boiler in the microwave. Pour chocolate into the bowl of an electric mixer. Cut the butter into pieces and beat the butter into the chocolate, one piece at a time. Beat in the hot sugar water. Slowly beat in the eggs, one at a time.

Pour the batter into the cake pan. Put the cake pan in a larger pan and fill the larger pan with boiling water halfway up the sides of the cake pan.

Bake the cake in the water bath for 45 minutes. The center will still look wet. Chill the cake overnight in the pan. To unmold, dip the bottom of the cake pan in hot water for 10 seconds and invert onto a serving plate.



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